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Downtown BID Working on Spike in Homeless

By Natalie Schachar
Wednesday, November 11, 2015

The Downtown Center Business Improvement District, a coalition of nearly 1,700 property owners in the Downtown area, has partnered with the non-profit organization People Assisting the Homeless to increase outreach to homeless individuals, the group said on Wednesday.

Through the partnership, PATH will lead an outreach program to enroll homeless persons in counseling and mental health services with a focus on helping individuals become permanently housed.

Marie Rumsey, the Business District’s managing director of legislative affairs, said the coalition would continue its partnership with Chrysalis, a non-profit organization which employs formerly homeless individuals.

“They bring different resources to the table,” Rumsey said. “We’ve had a big increase in homelessness on the ground, so we felt like we needed to connect more people with these resources.”

Members of Chrysalis and PATH will now work in teams to engage homeless individuals.

Jeremy Sidell, chief development and communications officer at PATH, said that the organization has been working more closely with business improvement districts as the county has seen a drastic spike in homelessness.

Since 2013, the county of Los Angeles has seen homelessness increase by 12 percent to about 44,350 persons, according to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. Among the unsheltered population, the number of tents, makeshift shelters, and vehicles increased by 85 percent, the authority said earlier this year.

“A lot of property owners are really concerned about what they see every day,” Rumsey said.

The Business Improvement District carries out a bi-annual survey of downtown residents, manages public relations for events such as the opening of the Broad Museum, and assists in keeping the downtown area clean.

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